

# Growing Wisconsin Readers



Tessa Michaelson Schmidt

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Public Library Development Team

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## Overview

- Three-year early literacy initiative based in Wisconsin public libraries
- Resource for caregivers of children ages 0-6
  - Reading tips
  - Recommended authors
  - Facts about benefits of early literacy
- Integrated brochure and mobile-friendly website
- Collaboration with state and local partners
- Early literacy is the seed for growing lifelong learners



## VISION

The period from birth to kindergarten is crucial for developing language and early literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions (or attitudes). Children with literacy experiences at this age do better in school and in life. The Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative aims to support Wisconsin caregivers of young children with information about early literacy so they can prepare children for learning at school and beyond. Rooted in public libraries, Growing Wisconsin Readers will help bridge early literacy experiences with public education. It will serve as a statewide model while simultaneously supporting local library efforts. Growing Wisconsin Readers will be available to caregivers in multiple formats and at multiple venues.

## OUTCOME

Wisconsin public libraries will develop and maintain stronger community relationships as a result of the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative. Libraries will enrich services to children, families, and caregivers while fortifying connections with childcare providers, community locales that serve families with young children, and public schools. Growing Wisconsin Readers directly supports Read to Lead Task Force recommendations. Read to Lead is a comprehensive effort to make sure Wisconsin students have the most crucial skill they need to excel in life: the ability to read.

Growing Wisconsin Readers will increase the awareness of early literacy benefits within libraries and communities. Children, families, and caregivers who participate in early literacy activities will strengthen reading relationships with each other. A young child's experience with books and libraries, shared with caring adults and siblings, is a positive indicator of reading readiness by school-age. Children exposed to early literacy activities and reading experiences are better positioned for success in school and success in life.

## PRODUCTS

Growing Wisconsin Readers components will include an integrated brochure and mobile-friendly website. The materials will be produced in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

### *Brochure*

The brochure will provide the leading thrust of the campaign. Brochures will be displayed in libraries, but more importantly, they will also be provided to and distributed by childcare centers, daycares, medical clinics, religious centers, and other community locales frequented by families with young children. The brochure, written for an adult audience in accessible (non-academic) language, will showcase photos of a variety of children enjoying books. The brochure will identify: developmentally appropriate reading habits; recommended authors; and key facts about early literacy practices as related to brain development and school success.

The brochure will be customizable for local libraries; e.g., contact information and story time schedule. A reformatted version will be available online as a PDF file for additional print/electronic distribution. To maximize visibility and access to the Growing Wisconsin Readers website, the brochure will include a QR code. A Growing Wisconsin Readers poster advertising the brochure and acrylic brochure holders will be distributed to all Wisconsin public libraries.

## Website

GrowingWisconsinReaders.org will provide secondary access to Growing Wisconsin Readers and will directly complement the brochure by providing additional interactive information; e.g., more author recommendations, local library catalog links, multimedia offerings, etc. While caregivers might be introduced to Growing Wisconsin Readers through the print campaign, the online component will be the main focus. As families increasingly rely on smart phones, tablets, and laptops for access to online content, Growing Wisconsin Readers will offer reliable information at their fingertips. Not only will caregivers find validation about how to read and what to read, but they will understand why reading to young children is essential. The website will also provide content support and tools for librarians, such as ready-to-go templates and resources. Additionally, as the Growing Wisconsin Readers online presence expands, interactive and personalized features such as an independent app may be developed.

## DISTRIBUTION AND TRAINING

The Growing Wisconsin Readers brochure and accessories (poster, brochure holders, etc.) will be distributed to public libraries via library systems in fall 2013. The website launch will be timed in accordance.

System youth services liaisons discussed the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative during a spring 2013 online meeting. Project components, audience, timeline, etc. were addressed. This pre-launch meeting served as the first of many communications with systems and libraries.

The system youth services liaisons will play a critical role in organizing the in-person multi-system workshops to be held regionally in fall 2013. The workshops will offer hands-on training for Growing Wisconsin Readers implementation specifically for youth services librarians.

Mini-grants will be available for public libraries through a streamlined application process to implement shelf-ready early literacy space and service projects. One to three grants will be offered per library system to ensure implementation across the state.

An online conference open to Wisconsin public librarians, library directors, and childcare providers will be held in late 2013, following the in-person multisystem workshops. The aim of the conference will be to provide specific information and training to youth services librarians as well as general information to supporters; e.g., directors and childcare

providers. The multi-session conference will feature experts in the field of early literacy and public libraries. The conference will offer instruction on early literacy tenets and expansive information on the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative.

## SUPPORT COMPONENTS

- Programs related to Growing Wisconsin Readers will be offered at the 2013 WAPL and WLA conferences.
- Peer ambassadors will offer advice and support to librarians who have difficulty implementing Growing Wisconsin Readers at their library or in their community. Volunteer ambassadors will be identified by system youth services liaisons and/or the WLA Youth Services Section.
- Libraries will target underserved babies, toddlers, and preschool age children involved in summer library programming to increase awareness of Growing Wisconsin Readers.
- The Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative and early literacy training will be incorporated into the Youth Services Leadership Development Institute. The institute will target rural and non-MLS degreed youth services librarians.
- The Wisconsin Youth Services Showcase will spotlight early literacy submissions related to Growing Wisconsin Readers on a monthly basis.

## DEVELOPMENTAL COMPONENTS

- The Public Library Development Team will recommend to the LSTA Advisory Committee that a percentage of the 2014 and 2015 LSTA competitive grant category for literacy be earmarked for early literacy projects that align with Growing Wisconsin Readers.
- Collaborative efforts will be made with UW SLIS faculty to develop an early literacy certification course offered through SLIS Continuing Education and available to Wisconsin librarians and childcare providers.
- As the DPI portal project develops, early literacy specific tools and network opportunities will be integrated and marketed to youth services librarians and early childhood and kindergarten educators.
- Outreach to childcare providers in the form of training and collaboration would be a logical and ideal extension of the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative.

## TIMELINE

| 2013      |  |
|-----------|--|
| January   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce brochure/website draft and elicit feedback from practitioners and caregivers</li> </ul>   |
| February  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop website toolkit content for youth services librarians</li> </ul>  |
| March     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host online meeting for system youth services liaisons; schedule system workshops</li> <li>Send brochure to print</li> </ul>                                  |
| April     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch website</li> <li>Attend 2014 LSTA Advisory Committee meeting</li> </ul>  |
| May       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present at WAPL</li> <li>Host online conference</li> </ul>  |
| June      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini-grant application process begins</li> <li>Summer library programming connections to early literacy</li> <li>Establish peer ambassador network</li> </ul> |
| July      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini-grant application deadline</li> <li>Finalize website</li> </ul>  |
| August    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini-grants awarded</li> <li>Develop sessions and secure speakers for online conference</li> </ul>  |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer multi-system hands-on workshops; distribute brochures, etc</li> <li>Host Youth Services Leadership Institute</li> </ul>                                 |
| October   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present at WLA</li> <li>Mini-grant follow-up</li> </ul>   |
| November  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host youth services liaisons annual meeting</li> <li>Market online conference</li> </ul>  |
| December  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete LSTA report for Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative, including mini-grants</li> </ul>   |

## COSTS

| Project   | Cost Estimate            |
|---|--------------------------|
| Brochure, posters, display holders, swag          | \$5,000-\$10,000         |
| Website   | In house                 |
| Website toolkit                                   | In house                 |
| Online conference speaker fees                    | \$10,000                 |
| System workshops expenses (mileage, set up, etc.) | \$20,000-\$25,000        |
| Mini-grants (40 x \$250)                          | \$10,000                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>\$45,000-\$55,000</b> |

## PARTNERS

The Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative will be coordinated through the Public Library Development Team at DPI, with in-house support from Publications, Early Childhood, and Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning. The Cooperative Children's Book Center and Reach Out and Read Wisconsin will assist with the development of the project. UW SLIS will serve as a collaborative partner on grant development and online coursework. Regional library systems will play a role in training and distribution. The Youth Services Section of the Wisconsin Library Association will also assist with collegial support and training.

Plant the seed for  
lifelong learning

